

Miscellaneous Notes

1. THE SPEED OF THE JACKAL (*CANIS AUREUS* LINN.)

On 5th October 1971 at about 11.00 p.m. on our way back to the Ghana Sanctuary from our roost netting operations, we saw a jackal, *Canis aureus* Linnaeus near the breeding colony of the aquatic birds. As the sides of the road were inundated, the jackal could not escape, and began running at full speed along the road in front of our jeep. We followed it, keeping more or less a constant space between the jackal and our jeep for about a kilometre and noted that the speedometer stayed at 40 km/hour.

Again on the night of 13th October 1971 at the same place, we had a similar opportunity to record a jackal's speed over a distance of about one kilometre and here again we recorded 40 km/hour.

B.N.H.S. BIRD MIGRATION STUDY

CAMP,
KEOLADEO GHANA SANCTUARY,
BHARATPUR,
RAJASTHAN,
October 20, 1971.

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2. ON THE FEEDING HABITS OF CRABEATING MONGOOSE (*HERPESTES URVA*) IN CAPTIVITY

A female Crabeating Mongoose (*Herpestes urva*) received at Nandankanan Biological Park (Orissa) on 1-ii-1971 whenever offered hard-shelled snails, usually selects the biggest snail first and carries it in her mouth to a suitable place such as a wall, water or feeding trough. Then with her back to the wall she holds the snail in her forepaws, rises on her hind legs and crashes the shell with force between her hind limbs and on to the hard surface behind her. While smashing the snails, the hind limbs are kept slightly apart and the tail to one side to avoid hitting them. She picks up the partly broken snail, eats the exposed fleshy portions of the snail and the process is repeated till all the fleshy portions are consumed. Thereafter the other snails are taken one after another usually from the biggest to the smallest and processed in the same manner. She deals with the hard-shelled snails in this manner daily but when the fleshy portions of snails removed

from the shells or fish are given along with hard-shelled snails, the latter are ignored.

Another male maintained on a diet of fish and snail flesh since 24-i-1965 when given hard-shelled snails along with the female from February, 1971, showed no interest in breaking the snails for the first ten days but used to observe the actions of the female kept in the same enclosure. From the 11th day it started breaking and eating the hard-shelled snails in the same manner as the female.

A second female received on 15-ix-1971 breaks and eats hard-shelled snails. All the mongooses are in excellent health on a diet of fish and snails. They refuse to take fruits, roots and nuts.

Prater (1971) in the BOOK OF INDIAN ANIMALS states that 'it is recorded of an animal kept in captivity that it would take hold of any hard object, such as stone or golf ball, and holding it in its forepaws stand up and crash it to the ground, hurling it with great violence between its hind legs, The habit is probably an indication of the way in which this mongoose kills and breaks up hard-shelled crabs and molluscs on which it feeds'. Our observations confirm the presumption of Prater (loc. cit.) that this habit of breaking the snails may be the usual feeding habit of this mongoose.

VETY, ASST. SURGEON,
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3. EXTENSION OF RANGE OF THE MONGOOSE, *HERPESTES PALUSTRIS* GHOSE (MAMMALIA : CARNIVORA : VIVERRIDAE), WITH A NOTE ON ITS ENDOPARASITIC NEMATODE

The recently described mongoose, *Herpestes palustris* Ghose from the Salt Lakes, near Calcutta (1965, *Proc. Zool. Soc., Calcutta*, 18 : 173-178) has also now been found at Bhasna, c. 47 km. south-east of Diamond Harbour, 24-Parganas district, West Bengal, on 28 September, 1967. This extends the range of the species by some 110 km further to the south.

This mongoose is very common in this locality and is found to feed mainly on fishes and aquatic snails, as it does in the Salt Lakes.